

Chairman Powell:

I am disheartened by your public response to the Sinclair situation. I fail to understand the logic of your "free speech" argument in lieu of Sinclair's clear political agenda, likely violation of Section 315 of the Communications Act, the fact that broadcasters' public interest obligations have long been found to be more important than First Amendment considerations (e.g., the indecency fines that the your FCC is rather freely imposing).

Ultimately, free speech for broadcasters IS the issue in that we all need and deserve MORE of it. Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

Sincerely,  
Robert Bellamy, Ph.D.  
Professor of Media Communication  
Duquesne University  
Pittsburgh